

Canadian National Union Presidents: An Empirical Study

Norman S. Solomon, Palaniappan Andiappan et Dan Shand

Volume 41, numéro 3, 1986

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/050226ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/050226ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (imprimé)

1703-8138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Solomon, N. S., Andiappan, P. & Shand, D. (1986). Canadian National Union Presidents: An Empirical Study. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 41(3), 491–504. <https://doi.org/10.7202/050226ar>

Résumé de l'article

L'objet de cet article est d'analyser dans quelle mesure divers facteurs influencent le temps nécessaire à un membre d'un bureau syndical pour accéder au poste de président d'un syndicat national au Canada. Un modèle fonde tant sur les caractéristiques personnelles des dirigeants syndicaux que celles des syndicats qu'ils administrent a été mis au point. Le modèle est vérifié au moyen d'une analyse de régression multiple.

On a compilé une liste de 151 présidents des syndicats nationaux au Canada à partir du Répertoire des organisations syndicales canadiennes 1984. On a expédié un questionnaire à chacun des syndicats en demandant que celui-ci soit rempli par le président du syndicat lui-même. Le taux des réponses reçues fut très élevé, soit 102 questionnaires représentant 67.5 pour cent du groupe. Les variables indépendantes sont les suivantes: l'âge auquel la personne était devenue membre du bureau syndical, son sexe, le pourcentage de ses revenus tirés de sa fonction syndicale, l'importance du syndicat ainsi que la date de sa fondation, le caractère public ou privé du secteur d'activité des salariés qui y adhéraient ainsi que le degré de scolarité des présidents. Trois variables étaient reliées d'une façon significative au temps nécessaire pour accéder à la présidence à un niveau de .05: l'importance du syndicat, le degré de scolarité de la personne et la proportion de ses revenus tirés de l'exercice du poste syndical. L'importance du syndicat et le pourcentage des revenus provenant de la fonction syndicale étaient en rapport positif avec la variable dépendante tandis que la scolarité allait dans le sens inverse.

Le sujet exige un travail supplémentaire. Le modèle utilise n'explique qu'environ un tiers de la variance dans la variable dépendante. Il existe d'autres facteurs comme les caractéristiques personnelles et les orientations de politique interne des syndicats qu'il faudrait peut-être considérer. Il serait utile de poursuivre une recherche qualitative dans ce domaine — par exemple, au moyen d'entrevues avec les dirigeants syndicaux — et utiliser les informations recueillies pour améliorer le modèle et, conséquemment, vérifier empiriquement le modèle ainsi perfectionné.

Canadian National Union Presidents

An Empirical Study

Norman S. Solomon
Palaniappan Andiappan
Dan Shand

This study examines personal and organizational factors affecting the rise to office of presidents of Canadian national unions.

This study examines personal and organizational factors affecting the rise to office of presidents of Canadian national unions. The present research focuses on presidents for several related reasons: their key position in the union hierarchy; the absence of empirical information on career patterns of Canadian union presidents; and the usefulness of the empirical information to trade union leadership development programs. Much of what we do know about union presidents has been limited to what we have learned about them through the media. Consequently, we know a great deal about a very few presidents who have gained some degree of visibility and/or notoriety through the media, and nothing about the majority of presidents who are rarely mentioned in media coverage.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to analyze the degree to which various factors impact on the length of time it takes to become president of Canadian national unions. A model based on both the personal characteristics of the labour leaders and on the characteristics of the unions which they head is developed. The model is tested using multiple regression analysis.

• SOLOMON, Norman A., Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Windsor.

ANDIAPPAN, Palaniappan, Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Windsor.

SHAND, Dan, Graduate, University of Windsor Joint LL.B/M.B.A. Program.

** The authors would like to express their thanks to two anonymous reviewers for their comments; and also to Dean Eric West and Professors John Dickinson and Peter Miller of the Faculty of Business Administration, University of Windsor, for their assistance.

Previous surveys which have studied officials at all levels of union government, such as those cited below, have increased our knowledge of union officials in general, but have added little to our knowledge of presidents in particular. This study, by identifying personal characteristics of the union presidents, may enable unions to improve leadership development. For example, if increased education is inversely related to the time it takes to attain the presidency, unions might wish to encourage aspiring leaders to further their education. Similarly, if the results show that being a female is positively related to the time it takes to become president, unions might wish to implement programs to ameliorate this problem.

THE LITERATURE

Various aspects of union leadership and/or the characteristics of union leaders have been the subject of several previous empirical studies. In the United States, Mills in his book *The New Men of Power*,¹ presented statistics on the characteristics of labour leaders in the AFL and the CIO in 1946. Mills' study was updated in a subsequent survey conducted by Friedman in 1968². As well, Van Tine in *The Making of the Labour Bureaucrat*,³ studied the characteristics of American labour leaders from 1870 to 1920. Mills, Friedman and Van Tine examined the age, place of birth, education, career path to office, social class, and the political affiliation of American labour leaders.

Empirical studies on union leadership and labour leaders have also been undertaken in Australia, England and India. In Australia, Johnston⁴ and Duffy⁵ conducted surveys on Australian labour leaders in the 1970's. Both studies examined the country of birth, age, education, and father's occupation, for full-time union officials in Australia. In England, Clegg, Killick and Adams⁶ surveyed full-time officers, branch secretaries and shop

1 C. Wright MILLS, *The New Men of Power*, New York, Harcourt and Harcourt, 1948.

2 A. FRIEDMAN, «The American Trade Union Leader: A Collective Portrait», *Trade Union Government and Collective Bargaining*, J. Seidman, Editor, New York, Praeger Publishers, 1970.

3 Warren VAN TINE, *The Making of the Labor Bureaucrat*, Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1973.

4 R. JOHNSTON, «Why Workers Become Union Officials», *Economic Activity in Western Australia*, no 14, 1971, pp. 9-22.

5 N. F. DUFFY, «The Characteristics and Attitudes of Full-Time Union Officials in Western Australia», *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, XVII, no 2, July 1979, pp. 173-186.

6 H. A. CLEGG, A. J. KILLICK, and Rex ADAMS, *Trade Union Officers*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1961.

stewards in British trade unions. The authors examined the duties, age, education, previous occupation, previous union offices held, salaries, attitudes and turnover of union officials. Similarly, in India, Puneekar and Madhuri⁷ have studied the age, religion and caste, mother tongue, education, political affiliation and the income of Indian trade union leaders.

In Canada, Chaison and Andiappan⁸ conducted a study on the characteristics of female national union officers. Also, Chaison and Rose⁹ have studied tenure and turnover among presidents of Canadian national unions.

The hypotheses for the present research were developed, in part, by using findings from the above studies. The hypotheses, their rationales and the research findings on which the hypotheses are based are discussed below.

THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable is «the length of time it takes for a union official to become president», measured in years from the time he/she first assumes an elected or appointed position¹⁰. Thus, this variable describes how much time it takes an individual to reach the presidency once that individual has become actively involved in the union.

The normative assumption made in using this dependent variable is that decreasing the length of time to become president, by leading to more frequent changes in that office, will decrease bureaucratization and centralization of power with a consequent increase in union effectiveness. This assumption is in accord with Lester¹¹ and Lipset's¹² argument that the inter-

7 S. D. PUNEKAR and S. MADHURI, *Trade Union Leadership in India*, Bombay, Tatu Institute of Social Sciences, 1967.

8 G. N. CHAISON and P. ANDIAPPAN, «A Study of Female Union Officials in Canada», Paper presented at the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Canadian Industrial Relations Association, Ottawa, 1982; G. N. CHAISON and P. ANDIAPPAN, «Characteristics of Female Union Officers in Canada», *Relations Industrielles/Industrial Relations*, vol. 37, no 4, October 1982, pp. 765-777.

9 G. N. CHAISON and J. B. ROSE, «Reasons for Turnover Among the Presidents of Canadian National Unions», *Industrial Relations*, vol. 16, no 2, May 1977, pp. 395-400.

10 «Elected or appointed position» is defined to mean any full or part-time elected or appointed position in the national union, whether it be at the local, regional or national level: e.g. union steward, grievance steward, organizer, secretary, secretary-treasurer.

11 Richard LESTER, *As Unions Mature*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1958.

12 Seymour Martin LIPSET, Martin TROW, and James COLEMAN, *Union Democracy*, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1956.

nal political processes of unions may not provide enough opportunities for individuals or groups to keep national union leaders sensitive to the memberships' interests. The result of such lack of sensitivity might be a decrease in the effect of unions as bargaining organizations.

Alternatively, Barbash¹³ and Clegg¹⁴ argue that centralization is necessary to make trade unions effective bargaining organizations. They believe that the union's political structure will keep the leaders responsive to the membership. However Kochan¹⁵ states that Anderson's¹⁶ study of local union democracy provides strong empirical support not for the Barbash and Clegg viewpoints but for the Lipset and Lester viewpoints. Anderson found that membership control and closeness of internal union elections declined with the age of the union and with the length of time union leaders remained in office.

HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED AND CORRESPONDING INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Hypothesis I: Union Size

There is a positive relationship between union size and the dependent variable.

Chaison and Rose in their study of the tenure of Canadian national union presidents, found that as union size increases, tenure increases, while turnover decreases. It would seem to follow from this that the time taken to reach the office of president in large unions is greater than it is in small unions.

Friedman in his study of American leaders, also found that there was a tendency for the time between first and present positions to lengthen as unions become larger.

¹³ Jack BARBASH, «Rationalization in American Unions», in Gerald G. SOMERS (ed.), *Essays in Industrial Relations Theory*, Ames, Iowa State University Press, 1969, pp. 147-162.

¹⁴ Hugh CLEGG, *Trade Unionism Under Collective Bargaining: A Theory Based on Comparisons of Six Countries*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1976.

¹⁵ Thomas A. KOCHAN, *Collective Bargaining and Industrial Relations: From Theory to Policy and Practice*, Homewood, Illinois, Richard D. Irwin Inc., 1980, p. 157.

¹⁶ John N. ANDERSON, «A Comparative Analysis of Local Union Democracy», *Industrial Relations*, vol. 17, October 1978, pp. 278-95.

Union size was treated as a dichotomous categorical variable. A «large union» was defined as any union having 5 000 or more members. A «small union» was defined as any union having less than 5 000 members¹⁷.

Hypothesis II: Union Age

There is a positive relationship between union age and the dependent variable.

In their study of the presidential tenure of Canadian national union presidents, Chaison and Rose¹⁸ found that as union age increases, tenure increases, while turnover decreases. It follows that if tenure is greater and turnover less frequent in older unions, the opportunities for upward movement are more limited, and therefore, «time to become president» would be expected to be greater, in older unions.

The age variable was treated as a dichotomous categorical variable. Unions were broken down into those which were thirty years of age or less (referred to as «young» unions); and those which were greater than thirty years of age (referred to as «old» unions). Certain events which occurred in the Canadian labour movement since 1954 would indicate that unions formed after this date would have a different complexion than those formed earlier¹⁹.

Hypothesis III: Percentage of Income from Office

Percentage of income from office varies positively with the dependent variable.

¹⁷ Some might express concern at our dichotomization of the union size variable. Our data indicate that upon breaking the sample down into six size categories (See Table 1) the median size is in the 2500-4999 category. The purpose here is to measure the gross impact of size in a practical and meaningful way. By splitting the sample near the median that impact can be captured and the statistical problems that may occur when more size categories are used, with a smaller 'n' in each cell, can be avoided.

Also, the proportion of «large» versus «small» unions among the respondents is comparable to known population proportions. In the population, there were 60 large (40 percent) and 91 small (60 percent) national unions. Among the respondents there were 39 presidents from large unions (43 percent) and 52 from small unions (57 percent).

¹⁸ G. N. CHAISON and J. B. ROSE, «Presidential Tenure in Canadian National Unions», *Labour Law Journal*, 6, June 1977, pp. 355-360.

¹⁹ These events include the formation of several federations: the Canadian Labour Congress (1956); the Confederation of National Trade Unions (1960); and the Canadian Federation of Labour (1982). They would also include the enactment of the *Public Service Staff Relations Act*, and the formation of several large public sector unions: the Canadian Union of Public Employees (1964); the Public Service Alliance of Canada (1966); and the National Union of Provincial Government Employees (1976).

Applebaum and Blaine²⁰ found that as the compensation of union officers increased, officer turnover decreased; this is probably because officer positions became more desirable and incumbents were less willing to step down from their positions. If there is less turnover in officer positions, due to increased compensation there would be a smaller number of vacant positions and it would thus take a greater length of time for an individual to move upwards.

This variable was treated as an interval-level variable, and measured in percent from 0 percent to 100 percent. Respondents were asked to indicate the percentage of their total income that was earned from their position as president.

Hypothesis IV: Education

Levels of education impact inversely on the dependent variable.

Mill's descriptive study found that education levels of union leaders were higher than for the general public, but lower than for top executives or government officials²¹. MacDonald, in 1959 pointed out that education levels for union leaders were low, but among younger men, becoming higher²². Duffy has suggested that an increasing number of young people with higher levels of education are looking upon full-time union work as a career in Australia — many becoming full-time union officials without previously having rank-and-file status²³. Chaison and Andiappan in their study of female union officers in Canada found education levels to be high — but attributed their findings to the fact that 42.5 percent of the officers surveyed were from professional employee unions²⁴.

Whether or not increasing levels of education shorten the length of time it takes for an official to move upwards in the union hierarchy is a separate question that has not been previously examined in the literature. It can be argued however that based on the literature higher levels of education are also a factor in reducing the time it takes for an official to move upwards in the union structure.

The variable «education» was measured in 10 ordinal level categories (elementary; some high school; completed high school; some community

20 Leon APPLEBAUM and Harry BLAINE, «Compensation and Turnover of Union Officers», *Industrial Relations*, vol. 14, no 2, May 1975, pp. 156-157.

21 MILLS, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

22 Lois MACDONALD, *Leadership Dynamics and the Trade Union Leader*, New York, New York University Press, 1959, p. 107.

23 DUFFY, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-175.

24 CHAISON and ANDIAPPAN, *op. cit.*, Canadian Industrial Relations Association, p. 2.

college; completed community college; some university; university graduate; some graduate study; masters degree; doctorate)²⁵.

Hypothesis V: Private Sector/Public Sector Union

Individuals in private sector unions take longer to reach the office of president than those in public sector unions.

Friedman in his 1968 study of U.S. labour leaders, found that public sector union officials took 11 years on average to reach their present position, from the time they assumed their first position²⁶. In the private sector's manufacturing and service areas the average time taken to reach the present position was 13 years and 15 years respectively. Similarly, officials in both the manufacturing and service sectors had been in their present position 10 years on average, while those in the public sector had been in their present position an average of six years²⁷. These figures suggest that there is less upward mobility and longer tenure in private sector unions than in public sector unions. Friedman attributed the shorter tenure of public sector union officials to the fact that public sector unionism was in a process of growth in the United States in the 1960's²⁸.

Friedman's study is the only previous inquiry into the relative mobility of officials in private and public sector unions. If his findings hold true for Canadian unions, we would expect that private sector union officers would take longer to reach the office of president than public sector officers.

This variable was treated as a dichotomous categorical variable²⁹. A «private sector union» was defined as any union having greater than 50 percent private sector membership. A «public sector union» was defined as any union having 50 percent public sector membership, or more.

Hypothesis VI: Sex

There will be a different impact on the dependent variable depending on whether the individual is female or male.

²⁵ Mark TRAYLOR, «Ordinal and Interval Scaling», *Journal of the Market Research Society*, vol. 25, no 4, October 1983, pp. 297-303. Traylor argues that treating ordinal data as interval data may be an appropriate decision justifying the use of parametric statistics for interpretation and conclusions. This allows for conventional multivariate analysis, such as multiple regression analysis, using popular computer programs.

²⁶ FRIEDMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

²⁹ Almost all presidents were from unions with either 100 percent private sector or 100 percent public sector membership. Therefore the variable was most appropriately developed as a categorical one.

Previous to the studies by Chaison and Andiappan³⁰ it had been suggested in other studies³¹ that women were found less frequently in the presidential and vice-presidential positions, and were more likely to be found in treasurer, secretary, or secretary-treasurer positions. On this basis it might have been hypothesized that women take longer to reach the office of president than men. However, in their study, Chaison and Andiappan³² found that female union officers were more evenly distributed in different officer positions rather than being found commonly among secretary and treasurer positions.

The literature then, gives conflicting indications as to what effect sex might have on holding office and, by extension, on the dependent variable. Therefore the direction of the variable's impact is not hypothesized. It is important, however to determine both the direction and magnitude of the impact of sex on «time to become president». As indicated earlier if the impact is such that females take longer to reach the presidency unions may wish to implement programs to deal with this situation.

Hypothesis VII: Age On Becoming An Officer

As entry level age into an officer position increases time to become president decreases.

Those individuals who become officials at an older age, may be more likely to understand and appreciate the intricacies of the political nature of a union. This factor coupled with their longer experience in the workplace could lead older officers to climb the union career ladder more quickly than younger officers. Also it may be that older officials will be inspired to move up the career ladder more quickly than younger officials because the older officials would have less time before retirement to achieve the presidency.

METHODOLOGY

A list of the 151 presidents of national unions in Canada was compiled from the *Directory of Labour Organizations in Canada (1984)*. A question-

³⁰ CHAISON and ANDIAPPAN, *op. cit.*, Canadian Industrial Relations Association, CHAISON and ANDIAPPAN, *op. cit.*, October 1982.

³¹ V. A. BERQUIST, «Women's Participation in Labor Unions», *Monthly Labor Review*, vol. 97, October 1974, pp. 8-9; L. H. LEGRAND, «Women in Labour Organizations; Their Ranks are Increasing», *Monthly Labour Review*, vol. 101, August 1978, pp. 8-14; J. WHITE, *Women and Unions*, Ottawa, Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1980.

³² CHAISON and ANDIAPPAN, *op. cit.*, Canadian Industrial Relations Association, pp. 2-3; CHAISON and ANDIAPPAN, *op. cit.*, October 1982, p. 768.

naire was mailed to each union, and a request was made that the questionnaire be completed by the president of the union. The mailing received a very high response rate. One hundred and two questionnaires, representing 67.5 percent of the population, were returned. Because of missing data problems only 94 of the questionnaires could be used in the multiple regression analysis. Missing data also accounts for failure of some of the descriptive data sums to total 102.

Table 1 classifies the respondents descriptively into several categories. Of the presidents who responded to the questionnaire, 78 were male, and 24 were female, and there were more presidents from public sector unions (61) than private sector unions (38). Fifty-two of the respondents were from «small» unions and 39 were from «large» unions while 47 were from «old» unions and 44 from «young» unions. A separate cross-tabulation showed that 13 (65%) of the women presidents were from unions with less than 5 000 members compared to 39 (55%) of the men presidents.

TABLE 1
Classification of the Respondents
(National Union Presidents)

| | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Sex: Male | 78 | 76.5 |
| Female | 24 | 23.5 |
| Public Sector (≥ 50% public sector membership) | 61 | 61.6 |
| Private Sector (> 50% private sector membership) | 38 | 38.4 |
| Size of the union: | | |
| less than 500 | 14 | 15.4 |
| 500 to 2 499 | 25 | 27.5 |
| 2 500 to 4 999 | 13 | 14.3 |
| 5 000 to 9 999 | 16 | 17.6 |
| 10 000 to 24 999 | 10 | 10.9 |
| 25 000 or more | 13 | 14.3 |
| Age of the union | | |
| 0 to 5 years | 2 | 2.2 |
| 6 to 10 years | 13 | 14.3 |
| 11 to 20 years | 18 | 19.8 |
| 21 to 30 years | 11 | 12.0 |
| 31 to 40 years | 16 | 17.6 |
| 41 to 50 years | 13 | 14.3 |
| 51 to 60 years | 2 | 2.2 |
| 61 to 70 years | 8 | 8.8 |
| more than 70 years | 8 | 8.8 |

Table 2 shows key time periods and points in time during the careers of the respondents. The average value of four variables: «time to become president» (the dependent variable); «average age on becoming an officer»; «average age became president»; and «average age of president in 1985» are given for various categories of presidents.

Mean «time to become president» was shorter for females (5.67 years) than males (8.69 years). As well, presidents who were university graduates reached the office of president, on average more quickly (6.71 years) than those who had not been to university (10.29 years).

On average, presidents of large unions took longer to reach the office of president (11.02 years) than those who headed small unions (5.48 years) and presidents of old unions took longer to become president (10.34 years) than those who headed young unions (5.31 years). Average time to become president for public sector presidents (7.64 years) and for private sector presidents (8.57 years) did not differ greatly.

TABLE 2
Key Time Periods and Points in Time During Respondent's Careers

| | <i>Average Time to Become President</i> | <i>Average Age Became Officer</i> | <i>Average Age Became President</i> | <i>Average Age of President in 1985</i> |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| All Presidents | 7.98 | 31.37 | 38.25 | 42.63 |
| Males | 8.69 | 31.17 | 39.03 | 43.69 |
| Females | 5.67 | 32.07 | 35.63 | 39.04 |
| Public Sector Unions | 7.64 | 32.97 | 38.90 | 42.57 |
| Private Sector Unions | 8.57 | 29.07 | 37.38 | 42.63 |
| Small Unions (< 5 000) | 5.48 | 31.63 | 36.87 | 40.89 |
| Large Unions (≥ 5 000) | 11.02 | 31.04 | 39.98 | 44.80 |
| Young Unions (≤ 30 years) | 5.31 | 30.17 | 36.24 | 40.33 |
| Old Unions (> 30 years) | 10.34 | 32.42 | 40.08 | 44.72 |
| University Graduates | 6.71 | 32.64 | 37.63 | 41.32 |
| Not University Graduates | 10.29 | 29.10 | 39.38 | 45.00 |

RESULTS

Table 3 provides the multiple regression results for all presidents. The model is significant at the .001 level and it explains some 33 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Only three of the variables, however, were individually significant at the .05 level: «union size»; «education»; and «percent of income from union office». Multicollinearity among independent variables, while sometimes a problem in regression analysis, did not pose a major difficulty here. Only two sets of correlations exceed $\pm .4$: union size and union age (-.4135), and percent of income from office and union size (-.4185).

Union size varies positively with «time to become president», as proposed in Hypothesis I. Chief executives of large unions took 3.9 years longer to reach the top office, all other variables being held constant, than did chief executives of small unions.

Education varies inversely with the dependent variable, thus supporting Hypothesis IV. For each unit decrease in level of education «time to become president» increases by 71 percent of one year or by 259 days. Thus where an officer has a university degree it would take that individual approximately five years less to reach the presidency, than someone with no formal education.

TABLE 3
Time to Become President:
Seven-Variable Model — All Presidents

Prob > F .0001 $R^2 = .3277$
 F 7.45 N = 94

Independent Variables

| | <i>Unstandardized Regression Coefficient</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>Prob > F</i> |
|------------------------------------|--|----------|--------------------|
| Union Size | 3.919 | 6.92 | .0101* |
| Union Age | 2.078 | 2.21 | .1410 |
| Education | -0.712 | 7.64 | .0070* |
| Sex | -0.666 | 0.21 | .6497 |
| Private Sector/Public Sector Union | -0.316 | 0.06 | .8150 |
| % of Income from Union Office | 0.035 | 5.64 | .0198* |
| Age Became Officer | -0.033 | 0.62 | .4330 |

* Significant at .05 level

Finally, as proposed in Hypothesis III, «Percent of Income From Union Office» varies positively with the dependent variable. For each percentage point increase in income from union office «time to become president» increases by 3.5 percent of a year or by approximately 13 days. Thus where the union pays 100 percent of the president's salary it would take approximately 3 1/2 years longer to reach the top office than when the union pays none of the salary.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results indicate that increased formal education decreases the amount of time needed to reach the top office in a union. Some might argue, however, that leadership stability is needed in labour organizations to ensure experienced leadership and that anything which leads to a more rapid ascent for leaders would have the effect of increasing turnover. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that even those who would make this argument would discourage increased education. The question then becomes what kind of education should be encouraged. This study focuses on formal education. It may be that unions and their leaders benefit more from educational programs directed specifically to their needs — such as those offered by the Labour College of Canada, national labour federations, and national unions. Additional research needs to be conducted on this question. Perhaps what is appropriate is a survey sent to participants in trade union educational programs designed to determine how effective the program was in both meeting the needs of the unions and in advancing the participants careers.

Based on the results it can be argued that larger unions need to make a special effort to reduce the length of time required to become a president. Again, however, the question of need for stability arises. That is, is it better to have an officer in power for a long time than to constantly rotate the office? The latter policy could have the positive effect of bringing new ideas to the organization but the possible negative effect of limiting continuity. Large unions may feel that while their presidents may take a longer time to reach top office this is a small price to pay for experienced leadership. Also, from an intra-union political point of view, stability may be upset if officials who have already put in a great deal of time on the career ladder see their aspirations swept aside by someone else's rapid rise. Alternatively, as indicated earlier in the paper it may be that more rapid turnover will encourage union democracy which will in turn enhance the union's effectiveness as a bargaining organization.

The finding with regards to «percent of income derived from union of-fice» raises the stability, democracy and quality arguments as well. While decreased payment would decrease the number of years needed to reach the presidency some may say that this decreased payment comes at great cost in terms of quality leadership. They may ask: what kind of leadership should a union expect or does a union deserve if it offers little pecuniary compensation?

This study has begun to explore the issue of factors affecting length of time to become president of Canadian national unions, but clearly more work needs to be done. The proposed model explains only about one-third of the variance in the dependent variable. There are other factors such as personality characteristics and internal union political situations which may need to be examined. It would be useful to conduct qualitative research into the area — for example, by means of interviews with union leaders and use the information collected to improve the model and then test the improved model empirically.

Étude empirique sur les présidents des syndicats nationaux du Canada

L'objet de cet article est d'analyser dans quelle mesure divers facteurs influencent le temps nécessaire à un membre d'un bureau syndical pour accéder au poste de président d'un syndicat national au Canada. Un modèle fondé tant sur les caractéristiques personnelles des dirigeants syndicaux que celles des syndicats qu'ils administrent a été mis au point. Le modèle est vérifié au moyen d'une analyse de régression multiple.

On a compilé une liste de 151 présidents des syndicats nationaux au Canada à partir du *Répertoire des organisations syndicales canadiennes 1984*. On a expédié un questionnaire à chacun des syndicats en demandant que celui-ci soit rempli par le président du syndicat lui-même. Le taux des réponses reçues fut très élevé, soit 102 questionnaires représentant 67.5 pour cent du groupe.

Les variables indépendantes sont les suivantes: l'âge auquel la personne était devenue membre du bureau syndical, son sexe, le pourcentage de ses revenus tirés de sa fonction syndicale, l'importance du syndicat ainsi que la date de sa fondation, le caractère public ou privé du secteur d'activité des salariés qui y adhéraient ainsi que le degré de scolarité des présidents. Trois variables étaient reliées d'une façon significative au temps nécessaire pour accéder à la présidence à un niveau de .05: l'importance du syndicat, le degré de scolarité de la personne et la proportion de ses revenus tirés de l'exercice du poste syndical. L'importance du syndicat et le pourcentage des revenus provenant de la fonction syndicale étaient en rapport positif avec la variable dépendante tandis que la scolarité allait dans le sens inverse.

Le sujet exige un travail supplémentaire. Le modèle utilisé n'explique qu'environ un tiers de la variance dans la variable dépendante. Il existe d'autres facteurs comme les caractéristiques personnelles et les orientations de politique interne des syndicats qu'il faudrait peut-être considérer. Il serait utile de poursuivre une recherche qualitative dans ce domaine — par exemple, au moyen d'entrevues avec les dirigeants syndicaux — et utiliser les informations recueillies pour améliorer le modèle et, conséquemment, vérifier empiriquement le modèle ainsi perfectionné.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS JOURNAL

Edited by Brian Towers

The **Industrial Relations Journal**, established in 1970, is a leading UK-based journal with subscribers in over 60 countries. Its aim is to report and assess important research for practitioners. Articles in the **Industrial Relations Journal** have included studies of the British miners' strike, redundancy, and the management of industrial relations.

From 1986, the annual subscription will include two companion issues of a new journal, **New Technology, Work and Employment**, edited by Colin Gill.

Articles in Volume 17, 1986 include:

Strikes on Merseyside: a regional analysis
RON BEAN

Trade union competition and merger in British banks
TIMOTHY MORRIS

Mediation and industrial disputes in Britain
RAMSUMAIR SINGH

Pay bargaining and management strategy in the NHS
J. LEOPOLD

The Japanisation of British industrial relations at Lucas
PETER TURNBULL

Against the trend: trade union growth in Northern Ireland
BOYD BLACK

Contemporary Spanish trade unions
M. RIGBY and T. LAWLOR

Human resource development in Singapore
B. WILKINSON

Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter plus free subscription to **New Technology, Work & Employment** (published Spring and Autumn)
Subscription Rates Volume 17, 1986

Individuals: £37.50 (UK) £45.00 (overseas) US\$67.00 (N America)

Institutions: £47.50 (UK) £57.50 (overseas) US\$85.00 (N America)

Please send orders with payment to:

Iris Taylor
Journals Department
Basil Blackwell
108 Cowley Road
Oxford OX4 1JF
England

or to: Journals Department
Basil Blackwell
PO Box 1320
Murray Hill Station
NY 10156
USA

Payment can be made by cheque or money order made payable to Basil Blackwell Ltd, by credit card (Access, American Express, Barclaycard, Diners Club, Mastercharge, Visa; please state card number and expiry date), or through the National Girobank (account number 236 6053). Sample copies, single and back issues are available; please write for details.

Basil Blackwell • Oxford and New York